

COYOTE BUTTES REPORT

This report is the result of a study commencing July 3, 1970 and ending August 20, 1970.

The study area was the Coyote Buttes Field just east of refuge headquarters. The site is adjacent to the buildings previously occupied by the Job Corps Center.

The purpose of the study was to attempt to determine the major nesting waterfowl species, number and sizes of broods, locations of broods within the area, and rate of water loss from the area. Incidental to the aforementioned information, an attempt was made to record the variety of other wildlife seen in the area.

Five walking censuses were made of the area which is approximately two and one fourth miles from one end to the other. An attempt was made to cover as much open water as possible as most of the broods were found in these areas. Open water was confined mainly to areas adjacent to the dikes and in areas deeper than approximately 30 inches. Encroachment of broad-leaved bur-reed (Sparganium eurycarpum) and bulrush (Scirpus acutus) into shallow water areas practically isolated deeper water areas.

Broods were first seen in the area on July 17. The greatest number of broods observed in one day was 21. This occurred on July 26. Broody females seen were included in this count. Fifteen of the twenty-one broods were cinnamon/blue-winged teal and of the fifteen, five were broody females. A tabulation of the species, brood size, age class, and where seen follows.

BROOD OBSERVATIONS

July 26, 1970

- Hugh H. Null

Species	Brood Size	Age Class	Where Seen and Comments
C/BW Teal	Brdy. Female		All seen in area adjacent to second dike. Vegetation beginning to encroach. Visibility poor.
C/BW Teal	Brdy. Female		
C/BW Teal	Brdy. Female		
Pintail	Brdy. Female		
Mallard	Brdy. Female		
Mallard	2	2A	Near first dike. Some vegetation encroachment, but area more open than second dike.
C/BW Teal	1+	1B	
C/BW Teal	3+	2C	
Gadwall	7	1C	Between third dike and the willows. Good open water areas from third dike southward to the road.
C/BW Teal	2+	1B	
C/BW Teal	2+	1C	
Redhead	3	2A	
C/BW Teal	1+	1C	From willows southward to road. Water more open and deeper than in northern part of area. Good stands of sago.
C/BW Teal	9	1C	
C/BW Teal	3	2A	
C/BW Teal	Brdy. Female		
C/BW Teal	Brdy. Female		
C/BW Teal	1	2B	
C/BW Teal	7	2B	
Pintail	8	2C	
C/BW Teal	3	2C	

% composition by species: C/BW Teal 71.4%; Mallard 9.5%; Pintail 9.5%; Redhead 4.8%; Gadwall 4.8%.

Most of the broods tabulated were seen in later counts and this count is felt to be representative of the observable broods in the area.

Other bird species seen in the area were: a pair of sandhill cranes, two marsh hawks, six avocets, nineteen coots, nine Wilson's snipe, one eared grebe, four ravens, and twenty yellow-headed blackbirds.

Willetts, black terns, and killdeer nested in the area. One killdeer nest with four eggs was found on July 3. No willet or black tern eggs or young were found, but broody birds were observed.

Four coyotes, one of which was ascertained to be a male, were observed. Also, three antelope (a buck, doe, and kid) were seen. Jackrabbits were numerous during the month of July but became less obvious during August. Coyote population may have a lot to do with the decline of jackrabbits. The remains of eight jacks were found on July 26.

Few signs of possible predation on duck eggs or ducklings were found. A dead female Redhead was found on July 26, but cause of death could not be determined. Remains of two teal eggs were found on August 20, but the predator could not be determined.

Water level under the willows near the diversion ditch entrance was approximately 23 inches on July 3. On July 26 this area was dry and appeared to have been so for about three days. This would indicate a water drop of approximately 1.3 inches per day after water supply ceased on July 7. On August 20 there were two areas south of the willows where water could be found. One spot contained a hole of water approximately 10' x 15' x 2". The other was approximately 12' x 20' x 6". All other water, including that around the dikes, was gone. One brood of three class 3 cinnamon/blue-winged teal were seen on the latter body of water.

9/1/70
Hugh H. Null